

Our Fourth Alpaca



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This is a story about unlikely friends.

We moved to our little bit of bush in 2005 for a tree change and to raise and release wildlife. We set ourselves up and to protect our little charges we bought three alpaca wethers. They soon settled in and established their pecking order with Peppy as the alpha male.



So far we have had two little whiptail wallabies in our care. The first was Jet and he was a live wire. Whilst we cared for him we saw that he would sit

next to the fence and seem to be communicating with the alpacas. They would come over and stand next to him and seem to be establishing some form of rapport. Jet never (to our knowledge) had any direct contact, just through the fence. This has not occurred to any noticeable degree with the Red-necked wallabies, Swamp wallaby or Eastern Grey Kangaroo we have had in care. We still see Jet from time to time with a mob of Whiptail Wallabies that become more visible when food gets scarcer usually in the cooler months.

But I digress. Our second Whiptail is a male named Sabre. He has established quite a friendship with the alpacas and has for all intents and purposes become 'our fourth alpaca'. He was soft released some time ago and now lives with the alpacas during the day and goes off at night with other whiptails as they move through feeding. Each morning we

see him back again with his big friends. They treat him as one of the herd and protect him. Our alpaca always have one of themselves on guard duty while the other two have a little lie down. Sabre has been accepted into their herd to the extent that they trust him to stand guard while the three of them snooze.

We have seen them when they think danger is at hand. One or two will screen Sabre whilst the alpha male goes forth to do battle. It is quite a sight to see. The alpaca have a very distinctive alarm call so when we hear it we dash out to see what is up, this is how we have noted their behavior with Sabre. They will defer to him in all things. Even at feed time he



just barges in and the alpha male lets him take his food first! We don't know how long Sabre will continue to live with them. He is free to come and

go as he pleases and often goes off to graze elsewhere around the farm, but while he is with his Big Alpaca Pals we know he is very safe from predators.

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